



5 programs closed and executive actions discussed at board of trustees meeting

by Jenna Outcalt | SHE/HER/HERS | ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR | jenna.outcalt@uconn.edu

The University of Connecticut board of trustees met yesterday and addressed closing majors, concerns over federal directives and another year of high applications.

Program Closures

The board voted to close three mathematics majors and two graduate medieval studies degrees at their meeting.

In the mathematics department, the Bachelor of Arts in Applied Mathematical Studies, Bachelor of Science in Applied Mathematical Studies and Bachelor of Science in Mathematics-Physics will have their last term of admis-

sion in the fall semester of 2025.

In her official recommendation to the board, UConn Provost Anne D'Alleva said the math closures were related to "a consolidation within the Department of Mathematics."

"Overall the mathematics major will be strengthened by building a stronger common foundation for all students. The consolidation will also bring the program more in-line with

math departments at peer and aspirant institutions," the recommendation said.

D'Alleva's recommendation also clarified the B.S. in Mathematics-Physics would continue to be offered through the Department of Physics.

The board also voted to close the Master of Arts and doctorate programs in Medieval Studies.

D'Alleva's recommendation to close the M.A. and Ph.D. programs in Medieval Studies said

that, although graduate degrees in these programs had been offered for over 50 years at UConn, "there has been a nationwide steady decline in the field."

The recommendation explains that the M.A. program has had no enrollments since the 2018-2019 academic year, while the Ph.D. programs had six completions since the 2018-2019 academic year. According to D'Alleva's recommendation, there is one student currently

enrolled in the Ph.D. program.

"As the only student in the programs is completing their doctoral studies, no impact on current students is anticipated, and no teach-out plan is required," the recommendation said.

At the board meeting, Jeanine Gouin, vice-chair of the Academic Affairs Committee, noted "these closures were recommended at the department level due to very low enrollment."

Responding to Federal Actions

At multiple points throughout the meeting, board members and those presenting to the board acknowledged concerns about recent initiatives from the executive branch that reduced government support for higher education.

Daniel Toscano, the board chair, took a moment to recognize the "uncertainty around higher education." He said the UConn community is not immune to the uncertainty but is doing its best to navigate the situation. He emphasized that UConn's highest obligation was to its students and that "the principles that guide this university have not changed."

"Our commitment to our

students and to fairness and to equality of opportunity, and on and on, are unwavering," said Toscano.

These points were later echoed by Andrea Dennis-LaVigne, the vice-chair of the committee for diversity, equity and inclusion.

"Our mission will be unwavering, and we will dig deep on concerns and be as active as possible," said Dennis-LaVigne.

D'Alleva presented the president's report instead of UConn President Radenka Maric, who Toscano noted was traveling with a delegation in India led by Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont. D'Alleva commended efforts to support students through the "uncertainty and change" coming from executive orders.

"Of course we are monitoring these executive orders closely under the leadership of our general counsel's office, and in concert with the attorney general's office, to understand the impact and the guidance as we move forward," said D'Alleva.

D'Alleva praised the vice president for research, Pamir Alpay, and his team for their work "supporting our research enterprise" and research to understand the impacts of executive orders. She also noted efforts from the dean of students, Student Health and Wellness, student success units, cultural centers and faculty and staff to ensure students felt supported.

Senate executive committee chair Laura Burton delivered the University Senate report to the board. In the report, she

acknowledged the "very high degree of anxiety" due to directives coming from the federal government.

"Members of the SEC have appreciated the thoughtful and transparent communication and dialogue we've had with President Maric and Provost D'Alleva and all the members of the senior leadership team, and we continue to be available for any and all conversations going forward and working together during this really uncertain time," said Burton. "And of course, we're all here to share the importance of our students and the great work of our staff and our faculty."

Jeffrey Geoghegan, the executive vice president for finance and chief financial of-

ficer, said during his budget presentation that the spending of federal grants was going well, but is an "item that we have to monitor very closely."

During public participation at the beginning of the meeting, Kathleen Tonry, an associate professor of English, thanked the university leadership for their advocacy, but asked them to "speak more directly and more boldly to a more uncomfortable truth."

"Because our public universities have a specific responsibility to educate voting citizens, they also have a special responsibility to resist undemocratic movements, and this is where I'm asking you in this room for your bolder voices," said Tonry.

Application Numbers

Vice President for Student Life and Enrollment Nathan Fuerst presented on the upcoming enrollment numbers for the upcoming academic year.

"If you can believe it after a record year last year, we have

about 5,500 more applications today than what we had last year on this date, so interest in the university continues to surge, not just at the Storrs campus, but really across all of our campuses," Fuerst said.

Fuerst also noted that spring enrollment for this

semester was "another high mark," with just under 24,000 undergraduate students across all campuses, which he said was about 900 more than last year.

In response to a question from the board, Fuerst addressed the implications of

decreased federal funding as the school navigates high enrollment and if it would affect Pell Grants.

"That's an evolving situation as we speak. As you know, in the last week there was chatter about a decline in the number of Pell recipients,

but we haven't seen that actually take effect or impact any of our students to date, so it's really important to for folks to hear that and appreciate it, but we're going to continue to keep our close eye on that," Fuerst said.

2025 Senior Scoop flavor is here!

by Gianna Salisbury

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The 2025 Senior Scoop ice cream flavor is now available for purchase at the University of Connecticut's Dairy Bar, according to the Dairy Bar Instagram.

This year's flavor is Bleed Blueberry Bliss, which consists of cheesecake ice cream with Biscoff cookies and blueberry swirl.

Every year, the senior class votes on a flavor and name as their Senior Scoop. This year was no different, as a form was sent out earlier in the year for students to fill out and pick different ice cream flavor combinations. After the flavor was chosen, another form was sent out so students could submit and vote on a flavor name.

The Bleed Blueberry Bliss flavor was submitted by five students: Robin Hunt, Shannon Maher, Gemma Peterson, Saachi Shah and Danielle Ste-

phenon. The name was submitted by students Madina Mamedli and Sophia Gaspard.

Hunt, who is an eighth-semester real estate and economics major, stated that she submitted five flavors in all and was surprised to find that her blueberry flavor had won.

"I submitted a few, but I did think that that one was most likely to win out of all the ones I tried," said Hunt. "I was like, this one's actually like, kind of good. But I was shocked that I actually made it all the way through."

After a visit to the Dairy Bar to try her flavor, Hunt said that she was happy with her choice.

"I recently went, and it was actually pretty good," said Hunt. "I will definitely get it again."

The UConn Dairy Bar website calls the Senior Scoop an "edible tribute to Husky Pride," and Hunt feels the tradition is a fun way for seniors to leave something behind at UConn.

"I think it's pretty cool," said

Hunt. "I think it's a nice way to leave my mark on the school before graduating. I'm pretty happy about it personally."

As for the name, Hunt and other students think it is very creative.

Eighth-semester allied health student Stephen Duhamel thinks the name does a good job representing the school.

"I like the name because it represents the school's motto of 'bleed blue,' and is a great play on words," said Duhamel.

Sixth-semester sociology major Carly Pitruzzello said that she can't wait to get to the Dairy Bar to try the flavor.

"I can't wait to sprint up to Horsebarn Hill and purchase a pint of perfection," said Pitruzzello.

Macie Watkins, a sixth-semester communication major, said that she is looking forward to trying the new flavor and also is excited to create her own flavor next year as a senior.

"It's a crazy combo," said Watkins. "I guess I'll find out when I visit the Dairy Bar. I



ILLUSTRATION BY SARAH CHANTRES/STAFF ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

am very excited to create a flavor next year. It's going to be so fun. It is a great tradition."

For those interested in trying the Senior Scoop flavor or

any other Dairy Bar ice cream, the Dairy Bar is open every Tuesday to Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

CORRECTION: YESTERDAY'S ARTICLE ABOUT THE USG DEBATES HAS BEEN UPDATED TO REFLECT THAT BERNARD HAD THE ONLY SUCCESSFUL REBUTTAL REQUEST DURING THE DEBATE. ANOTHER REBUTTAL REQUEST WAS MADE BY GUTHRIE BUT WAS DENIED.

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News

UnitedHealth's Medicare Advantage billing tactics amid fraud allegations

by **Harika Goteti**
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On Feb. 21, Luigi Mangione appeared in New York State Court to face murder and terror charges for the killing of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson, according to CNN. NBC News states that “[d]ozens of Mangione supporters started lining up outside the courthouse around 4 a.m., hoping for a chance to be inside the room for the afternoon hearing.”

In a statement posted this week on a website for his legal defense, Mangione said, “I am overwhelmed by—and grateful for—everyone who has written me to share their stories and express their support.”

The attention around this case sparked broader discussion about the healthcare system. The Department of Justice is launching a civil fraud investigation into UnitedHealth Group's Medicare billing practices, reports The Wall Street Journal.

The probe examines whether the company inappropriately recorded diagnoses to increase federal payments for its Medicare Advantage plans. Doctors have reported that UnitedHealth encouraged them to document additional diagnoses. Some diagnoses, like secondary hyperaldosteronism,

were allegedly added without lab tests, reported by Straight Arrow News.

The WSJ analysis further found UnitedHealth-employed doctors significantly increased lucrative diagnoses after patients joined their Medicare Advantage plans. UnitedHealth denied wrongdoing, arguing its practices improve early disease detection and reduce healthcare costs.

The company accused Wall Street Journal of conducting “a year-long campaign against Medicare Advantage” and called any suggestion of fraud “outrageous and false,” according to the Wall Street Journal.

Musk's Mission: The five-achievement challenge

Federal workers received an email instructing them to document five things they accomplished in the past week, CBS News reports. Elon Musk, who is overseeing the White House's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), said those who don't reply would risk losing their jobs via a post on X.

“Failure to respond will be taken as a resignation,” the post reads after stating that “[c]onsistent with President @realDonaldTrump's instructions, all federal employees will shortly receive an email requesting to understand what they got done last week.”

However, at least three agencies have told their workers to ignore the request and not respond, casting doubt on whether Musk's threat is enforceable.

The United States Office of Personnel Management (OPM) had asked federal employees to submit a summary of their activities by Monday, but agencies like the FBI, State Department and Pentagon have instructed workers to ignore the request.

The Department of Defense (DOD) instructed its civilian workforce to disregard the billionaire's request, while Kash Patel, who was confirmed by the Senate last week as the new FBI director, also told employees to stand down, reports Fox News.

CBS News reports that Trump praised Musk's efforts at DOGE to reduce government waste. Everett Kelley, the president of the American Federation of Government Employees writes, “This request, and the resulting confusion, is not just inappropriate—it is disruptive to essential government functions,” as stated by The Guardian.

Las Vegas woman charged in deadly romance scam targeting elderly men

Forty-Three year old Aurora Phelps, a Las Vegas woman with dual citizenship in the U.S and Mexico, has been charged

in a 21-count indictment for an alleged romance scheme. Investigators say she used online dating apps to lure and drug mostly older men, gaining access to their banks, cars, Social Security and retirement accounts.

Phelps, who is currently in custody in Mexico, is facing a federal indictment with seven counts of wire fraud, three counts of mail fraud, six counts of bank fraud, three counts of identity theft, one count of kidnapping and one count of kidnapping resulting in death. If convicted, she could be sentenced to life in prison, according to CNN.

Phelps allegedly met a victim online in July 2021, and over the next two months, “attempted to persuade him to travel with her to Mexico,” reports CBS News.

US News reported that in November 2021, she met the man for lunch, drugged him without his consent and left him unconscious for five days, during which she stole electronics and used his information to sell his \$3.3 million Apple stock.

CNN reports that a year later, Phelps met another elderly man online, drugged him in person and accessed his financial accounts. She used his American Express card, convinced him to fly to Mexico City and rented a hotel room with his Wells Fargo

card. Phelps returned to the U.S. without the second victim, who was found dead in the hotel.

Phelps also allegedly transferred \$7,000 from another victim's Capital One account to buy a motorcycle and made wire transfers totaling \$3,849 into her and her husband's accounts. She changed the victim's Social Security password.

Furthermore, the aforementioned CNN article stated that in December 2021, Phelps met a third victim at the Hard Rock Hotel in Guadalajara, Mexico, and “caused him to disappear.” Over the next year, she took his Social Security payments, withdrew money from his bank and stole his BMW. She is also accused of trying to become a beneficiary of his retirement account.

As AP News reported, the final victim was found dead in his bathroom in Guadalajara, Mexico, after meeting Phelps in May 2022. Phelps is accused of stealing from his accounts, including using one to buy a gold coin she allegedly mailed to her house.

“Officials believe there are more people in the U.S. and Mexico who either have information about Phelps or were scammed themselves,” The Independent stated. “If convicted on all counts, Phelps could face life in prison.”

Annual hackathon to be hosted by Werth Institute

by **Pierce Colfer**
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The Werth Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation will be hosting the seventh annual HackUConn event on Friday, Feb. 28. The event is a 20-hour hackathon where students form groups and attempt to create and program an innovation relating to this year's theme: “Universities of Tomorrow,” according to HackUConn's website.

HackUConn 2025 will be hosted in Peter J. Werth Residence Tower and will run from

4 p.m. on Friday Feb. 28 to 12 p.m. on Saturday, March 1. The event is open to all undergraduate UConn students, regardless of major or coding experience.

Students will form groups of up to five members and, once the event begins, teams will have 20 hours to come up with innovative ideas relating to the theme and then build a prototype of that idea, according to HackUConn's website. The competition will finish with each team pitching their idea in front of a panel of judges, who will select this year's winners.

The winning teams will receive cash prizes and scholar-

ships. The top three teams at HackUConn 2024, last year's event, received prizes of \$2,000, \$1,000 and \$500, respectively, according to their website. One team's innovation will also be selected to win the crowd favorite award. Previous winners have gone on to pitch their ideas to UConn's Get Seeded, an event where students can pitch ideas to potentially receive funding.

According to their website, participants in the event will be provided with breakfast, dinner and snacks during the competition and will have opportunities to listen to guest speakers, participate in work-

shops and network with industry professionals.

Previous winners have included “AI Assisted Air Traffic Control,” “Comic Bot, an AI powered ‘choose your own story’ comic creator with AI generated illustrations” and “SurroundSound, an anonymous platform for sharing songs based on a person's current emotion that helps relieve stress and to release negative emotion,” according to HackUConn's website.

According to a UConn Today article, HackUConn is “a chance for creative thinkers, problem solvers, and anyone

eager to make a difference to come together for the greater good.” All students are welcome to participate, “whether you're into design, business, marketing, or simply passionate about creating positive change.”

The Werth Institute hosts many other events throughout the year, including networking events, expos and competitions. “The Institute seeks to unlock an innovative mindset in every student,” according to its website. More information about the Werth Institute and HackUConn 2025 can be found on their websites.

The Daily Campus

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Wednesday, February 26, 2025

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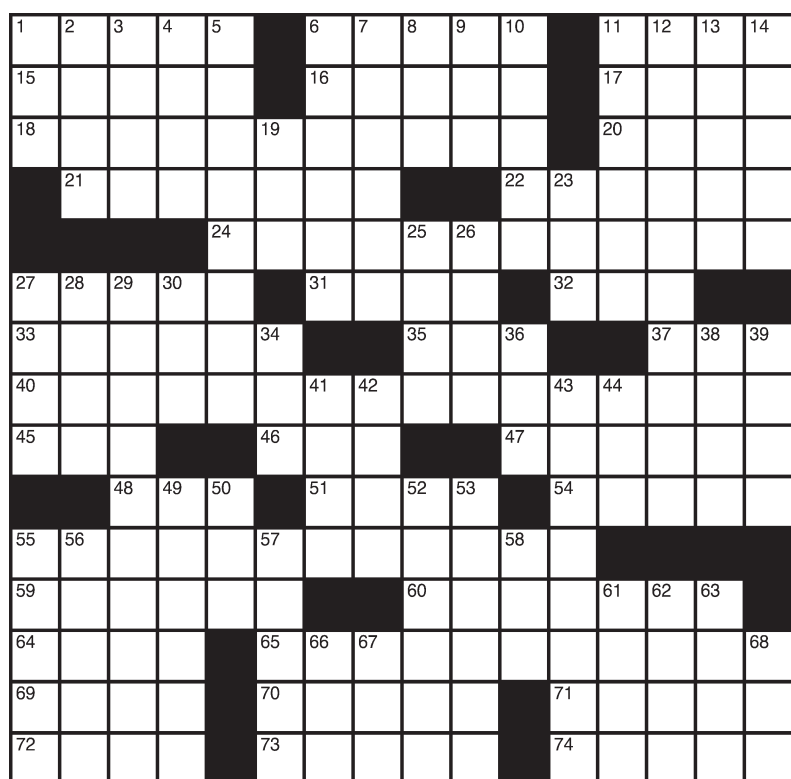
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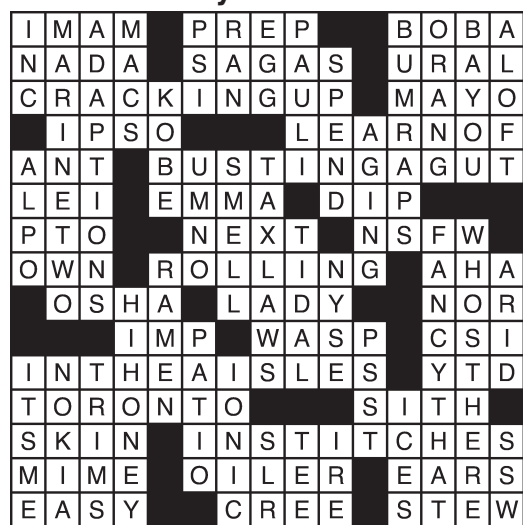
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- ACROSS**
- 1 Worthless stuff
 - 6 Eyewear, informally
 - 11 Sacred Egyptian bird
 - 15 Zing
 - 16 Prepare to start a hole
 - 17 Slam
 - 18 *Chimp aboard a rocket, say
 - 20 Luxury hotel chain
 - 21 Pink pencil parts
 - 22 Beat on eBay
 - 24 *Entertainment systems sold with controllers
 - 27 Calico's outdoor enclosure
 - 31 Walk of Fame symbol
 - 32 Furrow maker
 - 33 Nuts in a chipmunk's hoard
 - 35 TV hosts
 - 37 Flock sound
 - 40 *Storage area in a dashboard
 - 45 Hearty laugh
 - 46 Goose Island brew, for short
 - 47 Put on the right track
 - 48 "The Addams Family" cousin
 - 51 "Tell Mama" singer James
 - 54 Analyze for purity
 - 55 *Garage employee
 - 59 Attack vigorously
 - 60 Ancient musicians
 - 64 Dutch painter Frans
 - 65 Kinks hit about the local palais, and what can be found in the answers to the starred clues?
 - 69 Awards acronym
 - 70 Chess grand master Krush
 - 71 "Later, ___!"
 - 72 Damp at dawn
 - 73 Eccentric
 - 74 Madeleine of "Revenge"
- DOWN**
- 1 Green Day album released between "¡Uno!" and "¡Tré!"
 - 2 Rock climber's line
 - 3 Actor Epps
 - 4 Pet adoption org.
 - 5 Hall & Oates soul ballad
 - 6 Blizzards, e.g.
 - 7 Gift for writing?
 - 8 "Yikes!"
 - 9 Actor's alert
 - 10 Track with malware, say
 - 11 "Same here!"
 - 12 Fuzzy pollinators
 - 13 Concave navel
 - 14 Slides after braking
 - 19 ___ culpa
 - 23 Show to a seat, slangily
 - 25 ___ David
 - 26 Apex predator in the ocean
 - 27 Evasive
 - 28 Free speech advocacy gp.
 - 29 Didn't rush
 - 30 Music producer Gotti
 - 34 Bio or chem
 - 36 Hit show letters
 - 38 "Pushing Daisies" actress Friel
 - 39 Legal dept. staffer
 - 41 Intl. crude cartel
 - 42 SAT section
 - 43 Copies made with see-through sheets
 - 44 Grafton's "___ for Malice"
 - 49 Warm and comfy
 - 50 "OMG, no more details!"
 - 52 Knack
 - 53 Very soon now
 - 55 Oohed and ___
 - 56 Water bill statistic
 - 57 Spanish folk hero
 - 58 NPR host Flatow
 - 61 "Beat it!"
 - 62 Bandleader Puente
 - 63 Imitation flakes in a clear globe
 - 66 Guadalajara gold
 - 67 Univ. near Harvard
 - 68 Univ. senior's test



By Doug Peterson 2/27/25

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved



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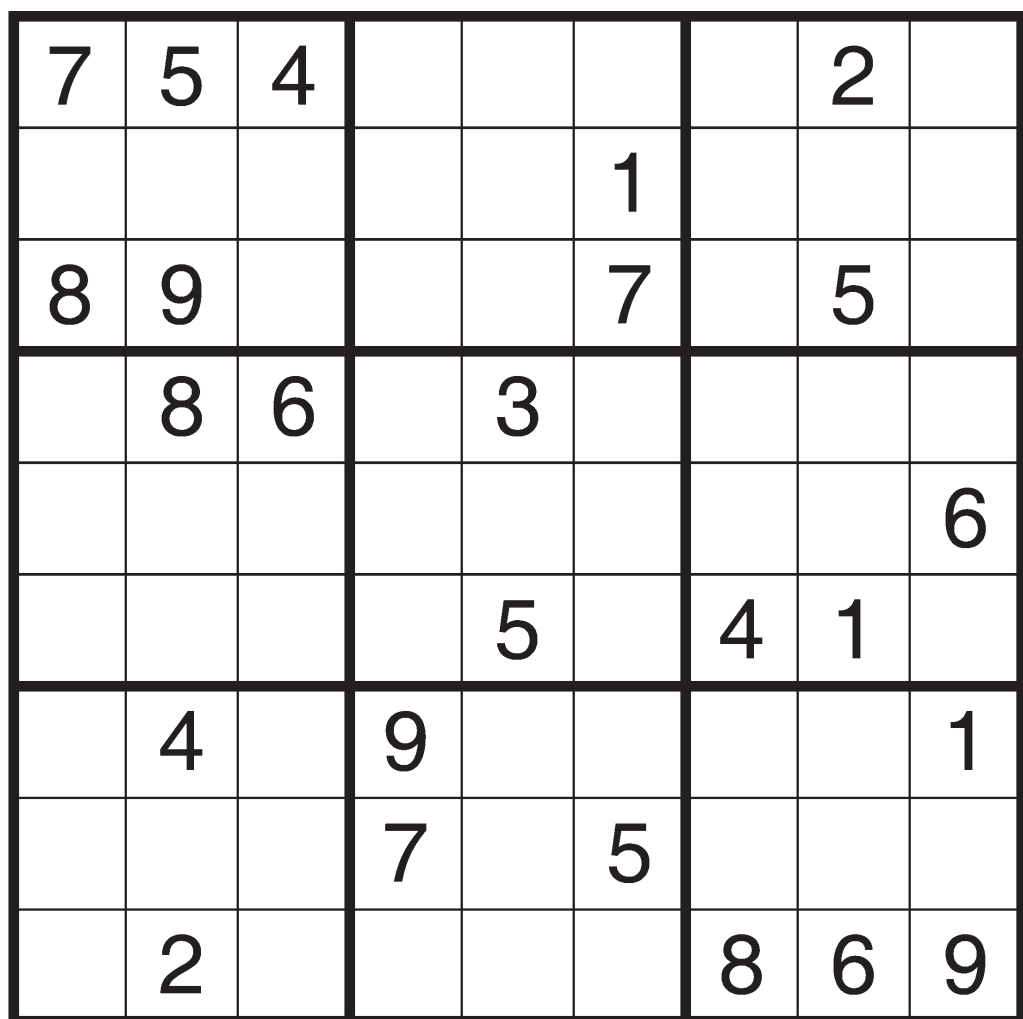


Daily Campus

Crossword



Sudoku



Solution to Wednesday's puzzle 2/27/25

5	4	7	2	8	3	9	6	1
6	8	2	9	1	5	4	3	7
9	1	3	7	4	6	2	8	5
3	2	8	1	5	4	7	9	6
1	7	9	8	6	2	5	4	3
4	5	6	3	7	9	8	1	2
7	3	1	4	2	8	6	5	9
8	9	5	6	3	7	1	2	4
2	6	4	5	9	1	3	7	8

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit sudoku.org.uk

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On the Count of Three

by Isaac Grad

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Welcome back to another issue of Your Movie Mage, where I discuss underrated movies across genres. Last week, we discussed the better-known “Dungeons and Dragons: Honor Among Thieves,” and this week we’ll be talking about the low budget and depressing movie, “On the Count of Three.” Content warning: discussion of suicide.

“On the Count of Three” is Jerrod Carmichael’s directorial debut and follows best friends Kevin (played by Christopher Abbott) and Val (played by Carmichael) who spend the film experiencing their last day before ending their lives together.

Val began the movie with a semi-suicide attempt, seemingly from a lack of interest in his life and job. Kevin began the movie in the hospital after a suicide attempt. Kevin is representative of someone who’s struggled their whole life with mental illness; he’s clearly deeply troubled but has learned to cope with humor and a general lack of seriousness. It becomes very clear that he doesn’t value his life in the way he approaches his interactions and makes decisions, though he values the life of his best friend.

Although more stoic than Kevin, Val shows a resilience and care for him. Despite the pact to mutually end their lives being Val’s idea, he questions his actions more carefully across the movie and his character buildup suggests he wants to live. The attention paid to these two characters is



amazing and was clearly very well thought out.

The movie deals with a serious subject matter and handles it delicately while also feeling realistic. Carmichael did an amazing job of balancing the pure darkness of this movie with realistic comedic moments and a heartwarming, but gut-wrenching, ending.

It isn’t easy to make movies that deal with suicidal ideation, especially with comedic undertones, but this movie does an amazing job. The film made a distinction between two forms of suicidal ideation. One of the men was in a difficult spot in life and had a difficult childhood. The other man only ever

knew struggle and no matter the circumstances in his life, he was miserable. I hadn’t seen this distinction made in a film before and it’s an interesting thing to tackle.

The ending of a movie is very important, and I remember being very concerned about what the ending would be on my first

watch. However, they managed to show the most realistic ending. It is heartbreaking, but clearly inevitable and far more realistic than an overly positive or negative ending. They didn’t frame Kevin’s story as a good solution, but rather as inevitable given his character, his childhood and life overall.

The movie also did a great job of showing the relationship between two best friends. There’s a genuine love between the two main characters, along with annoyance at times. Their respective arcs and nuanced beliefs add so much to the characters and their friendship.

The acting in this movie can’t be overstated. Abbott played a complex character by shielding his pain with comedy and a lack of seriousness. The delivery of all of his lines was perfect, and I couldn’t imagine the character being played any better. He brought most of the comedy to the movie, mostly in the unique ways he delivered his lines.

This movie is very depressing and deals with a difficult subject matter, but it’s an amazing movie and incredibly underrated. As a directorial debut, it’s even more impressive, considering its low budget and limited locations and actors. This movie is greatly underappreciated, whether it’s because of its pandemic release or because it may not appeal to the masses. I give “On the Count of Three” and underratedness score of 4/5. It has good reviews, but I haven’t met many people who had heard of it or seen it.

4/5

CONTEMPORARY ART: AUTHENTICITY AND UNCONVENTIONAL MEDIUMS

by Maleena Muzio | SHE/HER/HERS | STAFF WRITER | maleena.muzio@uconn.edu

A contemporary artist came to speak with students and faculty at the University of Connecticut about his lifetime of work on Wednesday, Feb. 26.

Liam Gillick, a British artist of Irish decent, has been in the art industry for over thirty years. Gillick has lived in the United States for the last twenty-five years and currently resides in New York City. He produces unconventional art across many mediums, including installation, video and sound.

Invited to speak by the Gladstein Family Human Rights Institute and faculty from the School of Fine Arts at UConn, Gillick is currently examining select archives of the Nuremberg Trials, which are located at the Dodd Center for Human Rights on campus. Currently, he is not sure what he will produce with this information, but something is potentially in the works.

Gillick’s initial calling to art school was the desire to “not work.” He was born in the 1960s, a time of modernism and, shortly after, the emergence of post-modernism. Despite disagreeing with its

strict, conservative ideals, Gillick was drawn to the concepts of modernism — the ideas in a post World War II world of creating architecture and art to make man subject to goodness, particularly captured Gillick’s interest.

“I was drawn towards this thing that I had missed. This modernism that was being rekindled in its second form,” said Gillick.

Gillick attempts to “take creativity back” with his art. At the presentation, he provided a brief background of his past before discussing his work. The goal of the event, titled “Reservoirs of the Imaginary,” was for Gillick to describe three of his major projects.

The first major work of Gillick’s career was an exhibition produced in 1994 called “McNamara,” which stems off complex research Gillick conducted surrounding Robert McNamara’s influence on the U.S. during the era of the Vietnam War. Gillick described McNamara as an Elon Musk figure in politics of the past, as he was appointed the secretary of defense and was heavily involved with Ford.

The exhibition featured a script written by Gillick in 1992, aiming to produce a film surrounding the interactions of several real-life historical and fictional characters with McNamara. Gillick’s primary drive to write the script was exposing some unknown truths in politics through art.

“I never heard of [Robert McNamara] before and I thought it was cool how Gillick made these pieces because he was so passionate about learning about him and all his mistakes, and that he fully wanted to switch the perspective and show everyone his errors,” said Lily Denver, a sixth-semester photography and art history major. “He is trying to show it to society, but also not trying to cancel [McNamara], though everyone does this. It was just interesting seeing he was trying to impact people.”

Following this piece, Gillick showed audience members the concept around another piece, called “A Volvo Bar”, which is a play that Gillick wrote about a bar next to a Volvo factory, delving into the concept of capitalism. “A Volvo Bar” became a theatrical installation in the late

2000s that allowed people to act in the structure and understand mirror and flipped images that represented the discussion of production. Rather than holding a Marxist view regarding the means of production, Gillick aims to prove that the conversation of production can easily be flipped by any person of any perspective. Gillick suggests that it just must be examined in different ways.

“I thought his work was really interesting and a lot of the things he was saying about artists trying to figure out a way to do the right thing, or a human being in general, I guess,” said Nyay Aye, an eighth-semester finance and fine arts major. “I thought a lot of what he was saying was relatable in a way, because as artists ourselves, I think we go through a lot of challenges of just trying to explain ourselves to other people.”

The third and final piece that Gillick described is potentially the most unique and shocking. Gillick and Gelatin produced a film named “Stinking Dawn,” which was produced in 2019 and featured at a film festival in Copenhagen.

The film is a proper tragedy, as described by Gillick. He wished to bring the forgotten genre back to cinema, labeling this film as his “ultimate contradictory project.”

“Cinema and architecture are the two great disappointments of the 20th Century,” said Gillick.

Gillick recognizes that the film is very strange but is the story of man on a trajectory of life. Each character has a specific, very strange desire, representative of today’s world. In the end, each character meets their desire, but they also engage in a huge battle between their desires and politics, which ultimately end up destroying them.

“Stinking Dawn” closes with a man covered in blood, writing of what happened and his ideal return, symbolic of a wartime narrator that is surrounded by death and loneliness.

Everyone today is concerned with artists having to constantly explain themselves or people having to justify their actions, but “to talk clearly is to give yourself away,” said Gillick.

QUEBEC

by Henry St. Pierre | HE/HIM/HIS | CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT | henry.st_pierre@uconn.edu
and James Fitzpatrick | HE/HIM/HIS | ASSOCIATE LIFE EDITOR | james.fitzpatrick@dailycampus.com

Welcome, dear readers! After reviewing They Might Be Giants' "Flood," we thought it would only be fitting to jump to the yin of TMBG's yang. If the duo of Johns are the smarty pants college grads, Ween are the dead-end high school dropouts.

Though their satirical drug-laden goofiness might err on the side of dimwitted and mindless music, Ween are undoubtedly a prodigious duo. Forming in the late 1980s, they quickly broke into the mainstream, performing a sonic 180 towards the late '90s, taking more inspiration from Lennon, McCartney and old school psychedelia.

"Quebec" is often hailed as one of their greatest albums and cited among some of the greatest independent rock records of the past few decades. Though their sound matured over the years, their lyrics still contain their biting wit and absurdism. Let's see what Henry and James think about it!

Henry's Review:

One could go on endlessly about the genius of "Quebec." "It's Gonna Be a Long Night" opens the album, with principal guitarist Dean Ween on vocals, sounding like an Americanized Lemmy Kilmister. The album swings down with "Zoloft," a swirling psychedelic tune that sings its praises about SSRIs.

The ethereal sound of "Transdermal Celebration" cannot be expressed in words. It's a cinematic cut that's sure to send chills down anyone's spine. Dean Ween confessed some years later to using Carlos Santana's guitar and equipment to record the solo, without his permission. The outcome was worth it, as this song is one that you must ex-

perience to understand.

"Among His Tribe" is an intimate experience, relying heavily on a graceful acoustic guitar line that repeats throughout the song. In contrast, "So Many People in the Neighborhood" thrusts the listener into paranoia and insanity. Sounding woefully un-easy at the start, it quickly devolves into beeps, boops and distorted vocals from Gene Ween.

"Tried and True" is easily the biggest song on the album, though it still has the hallmarks of every Ween song. The catchy dual guitar parts and down-pitched vocals distract the listener from its childish humor. The guitar solo in the middle is fed

through a sitar emulator and is one of the greatest solos on any Ween record.

As always, the record returns to the duo's signature psychotic sound with "Happy Colored Marbles," though this song is equally as catchy as "Tried and True." The chorus exposes the listener to warbly synthesizers and quiet screams.

"Chocolate Town" is an unusual song for the group. Nearly devoid of all the idiosyncrasies the band is known for, it mixes psychedelia with a country twist, a la their 1996 album "12 Golden Country Greats." The song has become a staple of their live shows, and one of the most memorable tunes from the group's

later work.

Later, "The Fucked Jam" tests the listener's patience. Somewhere between a mockery of Aphex Twin and two robot cats duking it out, this song would stick out like a sore thumb on an album by any other band.

"The Argus" is a desolate and solemn song. Ween have an unmatched talent of balancing overstimulation with haunting ballads. The backing chorus and layered vocals make this song a tearjerker, giving the poor listener emotional whiplash once again.

Ending on yet another ballad, "If You Could Save Yourself (You'd Save Us All)" throws out every conception one might have of this band.

It's hard to tell how sincere the band is being here, given the song's heavy lyrics over a parody of the stereotypical power ballad. This record sounds like a downright parody of '80s overindulgent hits like "November Rain."

Though "Quebec" contains some of the most accessible of Ween's work, it never starts to sound like another band. Throughout the parodies and homages to different bands and genres, this record never ceases to sound like Deaner and Gener. Like the Beach Boys' "Pet Sounds," a lot of the magic in this album must be heard to be believed.

RATING: 5/5



James' Review:

Three of the best Ween songs begin the record and, judging by their eclectic discography, that's a profound compliment. "It's Gonna Be a Long Night" delivers sick riffs and frenetic vocals from Dean Ween, all the while admiring drug abuse in a semi-sarcastic tone and giving the false impression that "Quebec" will be about a house party gone wrong.

"Zoloft" glorifies a more socially acceptable drug that I was on until a few weeks ago, complete with muffled vocals and harp notes meant to illustrate some hallucinogenic trip. While I'll argue Zoloft won't make you trip balls, the song mirrors the ignorant bliss of the world drug elicits.

"Transdermal Celebration" is one of the best songs ever made, and I will die on that hill. The lyrics are incredibly substantive yet not overly wordy, the pacing is immaculate—as a chorus after the first verse would've been overkill—and the music itself...wow.

The following two tracks completely juxtapose each other, with "Among His Tribe" featuring folky Dean Ween vocals and lyrics about nature, clashing with the intro track. "So Many People in the Neighborhood" offers an interesting reflection on the ambiguous intentions of members of a community, as the song manages to consume itself halfway through.

"Tried and True" is a solid entry-level track for those who only know the duo from 1997's "Ocean Man," but if you want to get freaky, try "Happy Colored Marbles." Functioning as the album's most sonically jovial track at points, there's always a looming doom hovering over before any signs of happiness are crushed by the explosive ending two minutes in, aided by the drummer and newest member of the Foo Fighters, Josh Freese.

"Hey There Fancypants" sounds more consistently innocent apart from the depressing lyrics. "Captain" is a homesick bender, doubling

down on the despondency from "Among His Tribe." "Chocolate Town" is another conventional cut made masterfully, with just enough cymbal taps and bass by visiting member Dave Dreiwitz.

Many fans have definitely waved their hands—or phone flashlights—at concerts to the solemn "I Don't Want It." The speaker comments on the good old times with his partner, lamenting, "You tripped me and I laughed when you fell, now / This isn't how it should be." The resolution found in each instance of the chorus makes this one hit hard.

It's a good thing this isn't no skips because "The Fucked Jam" disrupts this album's perfect consistency as the worst core song and only vocal-less tune. In terms of the final three tracks, they aren't as in the listener's face as the first three, but "Alcan Road" starts us off promisingly. It's a necessary segue into the final two, though it's a tad too airy for my liking. My gripes with these tracks don't deter

my unconditional love for the record as a whole, however.

"The Argus," without delving into who that figure is, starts sublime and climaxes near the end of its five-minute runtime with a guitar solo that is worth the wait. The album could've concluded there, though I'll call back to "SpongeBob SquarePants," a series this duo contributed to greatly.

The final track, "If You Could Save Yourself (You'd Save Us All)," is akin to "Sweet Victory" from the SpongeBob episode "Band Geeks." The only track to include an organ besides the first track shows how "Quebec" goes full circle. The passion from Gene Ween on the chorus, specifically "The time I've spent working myself to death," along with accordion usage and the song's overall progression ends the album on the highest of notes.

RATING: 5/5

Daily

Life

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LET'S TALK ABOUT TACOS FOR YOUR NEXT 'TACO TUESDAY'

by **Oliver Power**HE/HIM/HIS
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"Happy Taco Tuesday!" It's an utterance that changed the food choices of many people, including mine. Inspired by this wonderful occasion and reason to celebrate good Mexican food, I decided to make steak tacos for this week's installment of "I Made It So You Don't Have To." With a soft guacamole sauce, homemade Pico de Gallo, topped with goat cheese and a little bit of lemon juice, this dinner is a perfect weeknight meal and that does not take too much time to prepare.

This recipe was inspired by TikTok chef @Eatwitzo, who does a terrific walkthrough for how to make these tacos. I would also recommend the spice rub for the steak because, in my opinion, it is a perfect blend.

First, we'll start with the Pico de Gallo. Chop up the tomato, red onion and cilantro, and add it to a bowl. If you are unsure about how to measure out amounts of cilantro, I used about 10-15 stems. Separate the larger stems and keep the leaves, finely chopping them into an almost spreadable consistency. Make sure that the tomato and red onion are evenly diced into small cubes.

Add the juice of two limes and combine. Add salt and pepper to taste. I added about two pinches of salt and just a small dash of pepper, but I did not want the pepper to overpower the universally loved salt-and-lime flavor. Once this is done, throw it in the fridge for a nice burst of cold when you add it to the tacos later.

For the guacamole sauce, add one avocado into a blender. Then, add about four tablespoons of ranch dressing or sour cream. I did not have sour cream, so ranch had to do. Squeeze one lime into the mixture and then two teaspoons of lemon juice. Add two minced garlic cloves and a quarter cup of fresh, chopped cilantro. Blend these together. If the consistency is still too thick, add water until you have reached the desired consistency. Add salt and pepper to taste.

For the steak, chop up whatever cuts of steak you buy—I used sirloin—into cubes about the size of the cuts of steak they give you at Chipotle. If you have never been to Chipotle, I am sorry, but make them about half-inch cubes. Add all of this to a bowl and season using the listed amounts of chili powder, garlic powder, black pepper and salt. Drizzle a table-

spoon of olive oil so the spices stick better to the meat. If you want some spice, you can add a dash of chili flakes.

Heat a sauté pan to medium-high heat, drizzle some olive oil and add the steak. If your steak has too much fat, cut it off and add that instead of olive oil because it will render and create oil. Cook the steak for at least six minutes and then try it until it is as tender as you like it.

I left the steak a little longer to char some of the pieces to give it a smoky flavor. When you have all the components ready, it's time to assemble your tacos! I placed the guacamole sauce on the base, then added the steak and Pico de Gallo. I topped it with goat cheese, more sauce and lime juice.

This was a great meal for three and comfortably made 12 tacos, but it could be extended to 14-15 tacos. It's perfect for your next taco night or for the ever-so-popular taco bowls. It took me about 30 minutes to make, so time was not an issue. This recipe is also customizable, so you can add other toppings to the taco. Goat cheese, while sounding boujee, was a great addition and certainly worth moving away from the regular "Mexican cheese blend" that I usually put on tacos.



LOGO BY LILLIAN LAFEMINA, ASSOCIATE ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

INGREDIENTS:

Steak:

1 to 2 pounds of sirloin steak
1 tbsp olive oil
2 tsp garlic powder
2 tsp chili powder
1/2 tsp of salt
1/2 tsp of black pepper

Pico de Gallo:

1 large red tomato (diced)
1/2 a red onion (diced)
1/4 cup of fresh, chopped cilantro
2 limes juiced
Salt and pepper

Guacamole Sauce:

1 whole guacamole
4 tablespoons of ranch dressing or sour cream
2 minced cloves of garlic
1-quarter cup of fresh, chopped cilantro
Salt & pepper

Rating: **4.9/5**

Price: **\$29.18**

The Legacy Project at UConn: A new student organization seeking members

by **Anna Heqimi**SHE/HER/HERS
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With over 900 student organizations at the University of Connecticut, a new club called The Legacy Project (TLP), is seeking members.

The Legacy Project is a nonprofit organization that was founded by three women: Arielle Galinsky, Katie Furey and Wanda Schlumpf from Tufts University in Medford, Mass.

TLP connects college students with older adults, giving them the opportunity to visit older adults in senior centers and interview them to learn about their life. At the end of the year, students have a chance to become published authors by collaboratively writing a book detailing the stories of the older adults they spoke to.

Speaking with Galinsky and Schlumpf through a Zoom interview, they each shared what motivated them to create TLP.

Galinsky lost both her grandfathers at the age of 10. She shared that they were her role models and that she regretted not hearing and learning about their life histories.

"A lot of family members do not feel the need to ask their older family members about their life histories," added Galinsky.

When Galinsky was a junior in high school, she began working in a senior community and would hear glimpses of the community members' histories. She was intrigued and wanted to learn more.

"[TLP] was born out of that personal regret. Inspiration

came from that personal experience with my grandfathers and then because I was in the environment of a senior community, it allowed for the framework to be able to actually do the project, to do the interviews with a lot of the older adults living there," shared Galinsky.

Schlumpf is a master's student studying biology at Tufts University. She shared that she has a close relationship with her grandmother, who is currently 98. Schlumpf said that her grandmother would share stories about her mother—Schlumpf's great-grandmother—and that her grandmother wanted something for her family to remember her by. Now, Schlumpf wants to write a book about the stories of her grandmother and great-grandmother.

"She wanted that for her mom, and I want that for her. That's a way to honor them both," said Schlumpf.

When Schlumpf was 14, she lost her father, and her family members and family friends created a "Book of Memories." She shared that every year on Father's Day and on his birthday, she would read the book and learn things about him that she never knew. With these two experiences, according to Schlumpf, the passion for sharing older adults' stories was born.

According to the TLP website, the mission is "to build sustainable, intergenerational connections as a means to combat social isolation, preserve the life histories of older adults, engage young individuals in revolutionizing perspectives on aging, and ensure that every old adult — re-

gardless of background — has the opportunity to share their experiences."

Currently, UConn has a chapter president and vice president, but is looking for interested members to join the organization.

When asked about the importance of TLP, Galinsky shared that both seniors and college students often feel socially isolated. TLP is a space to "create unconventional friendships," said Galinsky.

"It is a space for those friendships to form naturally," echoed Schlumpf.

Schlumpf shared what the meetings of the organization look like. She said that there are once-a-week meetings for 1.5 hours where members visit the nursing home, meet their match and interview them. There is also another meeting for one hour once a week where members get to know each other or hear from guest speakers. The organization also does bonding activities around once a month. Schlumpf shared that one activity was making flower arrangements and giving them to the residents of a senior home.

At the end of the year, students review their notes and craft their stories. During this time, they consistently show their match and fact-check. Schlumpf described it as a collaborative process. The books get edited by other students or school newspaper editors and get published through Amazon. Currently, there are two published books from the Tufts chapter of TLP and one from the Kent State chapter.

According to Galinsky, each

year, each student writes one chapter about their match, which is one chapter of the book.

One copy of the book is provided to each of the residents featured for free. The books are on sale for community members and family members.

When asked in a follow-up phone interview where the proceeds go to, Galinsky said the book sales are used "to continue the functionality of the actual project."

According to Galinsky, at Tufts, some of the profit from the sales was used to purchase supplies to make cards for the residents. The money also goes to creating joint activities between the students and residents and towards "being able to run the club."

Emily Wang is an eighth-semester student majoring in general studies and is the president of the UConn chapter of TLP. She shared in an in-person interview that her goal is to make "TLPxUConn" a program, rather than just a student organization.

One goal is to implement a TLP internship at the UConn Waterbury campus for students minoring in Gerontology. According to the UConn Academic Catalog, the minor provides "specialized training in aging."

Wang shared that one of the requirements for Gerontology minors at the UConn Waterbury campus is to complete an internship.

"We are going to be their go-to program" Wang said. "We are not going the club route per se."

When asked how she got involved in her position as

president, she shared that a girl from her hometown—co-founder Katie Furey—and two others started TLP at Tufts and turned it into a nonprofit after graduation. She saw it on Instagram after one of the co-founders shared that they were expanding TLP to other campuses, and that anyone interested should reach out.

"It turned out to be a great fit," said Wang.

According to Wang, another way she is trying to make "TLPxUConn" into a program is through integrating the organization into a course taught at Storrs. Wang shared that she is in contact with Kenneth Campellone, an associate professor in molecular and cell biology. He teaches a "W" course at the Storrs campus titled MCB 3841W: Anti-Aging Therapeutics.

"We are in talk of integrating TLP into his course curriculum," said Wang.

Wang said her main objective is getting students involved and "getting college students excited about this." While it is currently just her and her vice president Christopher Sindoni, Wang said she is eager for more members.

"We are trying to combat social isolation and ageism," said Wang. "It is an exciting program that will offer students experience when it comes to storytelling, publishing, and even networking. These are transferable skills into the real world."

Students interested in joining can contact Wang at emily.wang@uconn.edu or Sindoni at christopher.sindoni@uconn.edu.



Opinion

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A Future **Stolen**: Recent NIH research grant cuts threaten medicine, education and innovation

by **Hannah McClellan**
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The breakthroughs of tomorrow are being built on the research of today. Throughout history, innovation has driven progress. Humanity has strived to bridge the gap for a better future, but in light of recent executive orders, that bridge has been set aflame. In an attempt to make the rich even richer, the future of science is being sabotaged. Laboratories that are researching groundbreaking concepts, students pursuing change and the future of medicine are all being pushed aside by the very leaders who are supposed to pursue progress, not chase comfort in the form of financial greed.

The Trump administration has recently cut research funding from The National Institutes of Health (NIH) significantly. More specifically, indirect research grants, which are used to support a range of essential functions crucial to maintaining a labo-

ratory, have been severely reduced. The NIH is now being limited to a 15% indirect funding cap, a dramatic drop from previous ranges of 60 to 70%. These cuts are hitting close to home, as UConn's original indirect funding of 61% is being slashed to fit the 15% cap. UConn president Radenka Maric stated in a recent response to the loss of funding that, "if implemented as announced, this change will impair our ability to produce innovative research that benefits all parts of society and place a significant financial strain on the university."

Money is a catalyst in scientific research, propelling discoveries that otherwise would have taken lifetimes to uncover. In the past, NIH investments have fueled incredible results, such as advancements in gene editing techniques. These new technologies are currently being tested to treat genetic diseases such as cancer and sickle cell disease. When labs are faced with the purging of funds, life-saving results will be stalled. This is time

that millions of families cannot buy, even with the four billion dollars the government is saving by cutting this funding.

Along with the loss of time, we will also see an increase in subpar results due to insignificant funds. When research lacks proper funding, the results are compromised. Promising studies are rushed, equipment fails and discoveries that should have been propelling progress are instead delayed or never realized. Our government expects us to settle for mediocrity, yet I challenge you to reach out for reliability.

Beyond the harm done to the country as a whole, these cuts harm students. As an undergraduate student pursuing medical school after graduation, I am experiencing the detrimental results of these cuts. For reference, to have a strong medical or dental school application, you need a significant amount of time dedicated to research. This is already a daunting task considering many professors are already hesitant to let undergraduate students

into their lab. Now, with possible staffing cuts, material loss and threats of shutdown, the already-difficult task of getting into a lab has become almost impossible. In addition to being on the pre-med track, I am also an out-of-state student. This means that if I needed to stay over a break to work in the lab, I would be expected to pay out-of-pocket or plead with the professor to use the already-diminished budget to fund my pursuits. These struggles are faced by millions of students across the country. If students cannot get the required amount of research experience, many students will not be able to successfully apply to further schooling, potentially leading to an overall decline in these crucial jobs.

The most alarming aspect of these cuts is the thought process of the people who are making them. In a recent report, Sen. Ted Cruz claimed that NIH research funded "neo-Marxist" ideologies and left-wing "propaganda." This claim is a terrifying glance at a politician trying

to undermine the very foundation of scientific progress. By branding life-saving research as "propaganda," Sen. Cruz is attacking funding, as well as the pursuit of knowledge. This concept fuels a dangerous future where science is no longer evaluated by its merit, but rather by its political convenience. If research aimed at curing diseases, advancing medical technology and improving public health is dismissed as ideological, the future of innovation is at risk because of willful political sabotage.

Not all hope is lost. As I've said before, you have the power to enact change. With an unpredictable future, educate yourself. Understand those who you call to power, and what they support. Unity is found in uncertainty. Research institutes, policies and lawsuits happening and lend them your support. Now is the time to take action. Demand that our future be prioritized over politics. Support the institutions driving progress and challenge the policies that threaten discovery.

Patrick's Politics: The abandonment of Ukraine will haunt America

by **Patrick Minnerly**
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A little more than three years have passed since Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022, setting off the worst conflict in Europe since the horrors of World War II. The war is a nightmare that every Ukrainian will remember for the rest of their lives. But, after years of grueling conflict, America has decided it is time to forget. We have abandoned our commitment to supporting Ukraine, and doing so, we have surrendered to the marching forces of autocracy.

At the beginning of the war, as Ukrainian soldiers fought desperately to stave off the Russian advance and save their homeland, everyone in the U.S. was on their side. We supported Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as he defiantly stayed in the capital city of Kyiv while Russian forces were just miles away, saying "I need ammunition, not a ride." We put Ukrainian flags in our social media bios and posted encouragements like "Slava Ukraini" or "Glory to Ukraine." Zelenskyy was Time's 2022 Person of the Year after a Ukrainian counteroffensive that pushed Russia's forces back. Yet, even in that impressive feature, Zelenskyy's chief of staff Andriy Yermak warned, "If we fall out of focus, we are in danger."

That danger has now been realized. The Trump administration recently met with Russian officials to discuss an end to the war without consulting Ukraine, a major about-face from former President Joe Biden's commitments to supporting Ukraine's sovereignty. On the three-year anniversary of the war's beginning, the U.S. voted against a United Nations resolution condemning Russia for the

invasion, aligning itself with the aggressors of a devastating conflict that has killed and wounded over a million people and separating from the prevailing view of Western European governments such as France and the UK. These actions have all but served up Ukraine on a silver platter to the ambitions of Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has firmly established a dictatorship in Russia over the past twenty years.

The implications of supporting a dictatorial regime are incredibly dangerous, both for Ukraine and for America. In the past few months, Ukraine gradually lost ground as Russians throw wave after wave of soldiers at the Ukrainian lines. Zelenskyy and his compatriots need more assistance, not complete abandonment. But that's exactly what the U.S. has done, even trying to force Ukraine into a deal for its reserves of important minerals. According to Trump, the deal would see Ukraine tide over hundreds of billions of dollars in these rare earths, amounting to extortion of a country that we once wholeheartedly supported. Ukraine is caught between a rock and a hard place - on one side, Russia stands ready to grind their forces down, on the other, the U.S. is making threats and trying to extract concessions.

This brings me to the problem of appeasement, a strategy which the Trump administration is wholeheartedly embracing when it comes to Russia. As nice as a cessation of hostilities might seem for preserving lives, a negotiated end to the war between Trump and Putin would likely cement Russia's control over swathes of Ukrainian territory and leave the door open for further conquest. Letting Putin hold on to the territory he unlawfully conquered will send a message to Russia that his actions were ultimately accept-

able. His own country, despite a massive loss of Russian life due to the war, will not oppose him now that he has jailed and killed many political opponents. He will look at countries such as Moldova and Georgia, which have already been infiltrated by Russian disinformation, and see little standing in the way of taking them over. Meanwhile, similarly minded autocratic countries such as China, might conclude that there is no great alliance of democratic powers ready to stand against them anymore. While true that U.S. policy might differ from Russia to China, capitulating to Putin's demands clearly sends the wrong message on standing up for democracy.

The historical parallels are glaringly obvious. The U.S., as it did before the second world war, is retreating into a dramatically isolationist position under Trump's "America first" policies, leaving Europe to deal with their own problems. The issue with this approach is that it failed to work. America was drawn back into a major war, whether it wanted to or not.

The second part of history we should pay attention to is the period immediately before World War II. In 1938, Adolf Hitler's Nazi Germany aimed to take over Czechoslovakia, beginning with an area known as the Sudetenland, which had a large German population. This is similar to how eastern Ukraine, which Russia currently controls much of, has far more Russian-speaking citizens than in the western part of the country. Essentially, the democratic powers of the age let Hitler have the Sudetenland in exchange for supposed peace. Czechoslovakian representatives weren't even invited to the Munich conference where the deal was signed, just as Ukraine was shut out of



LOGO BY SAMANTHA HASS, ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

recent peace talks. A year later, the bloodiest war in human history was underway. The example is not a perfect one—Putin lacks the means to carry out a conquest of Europe akin to the Nazis—but it illustrates that sometimes peace is not peace, and that attempting to quell

the beast only leads to more problems down the road.

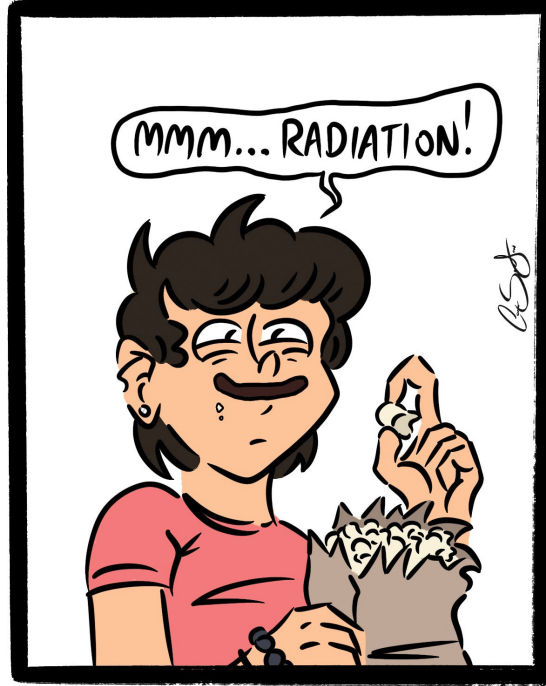
In a world more globalized than ever, appeasement and isolationism is not a viable strategy. The Trump administration only risks further, more widespread conflict in the long run by abandoning Ukraine.

Opinion

Photo of the Day | How we'll be cheering when midterms are over

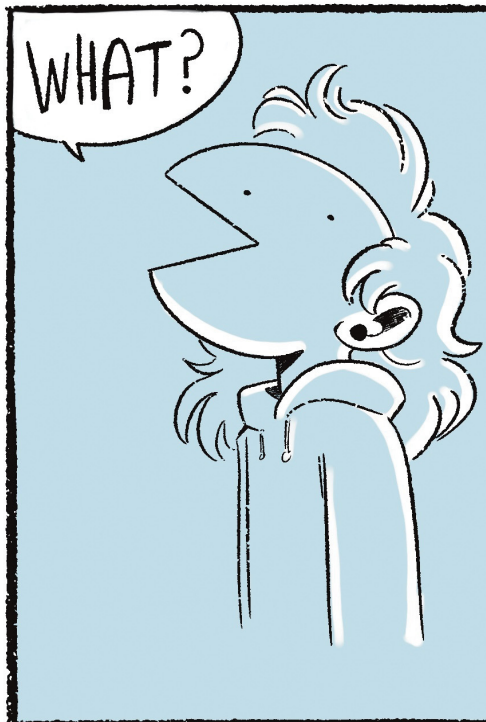
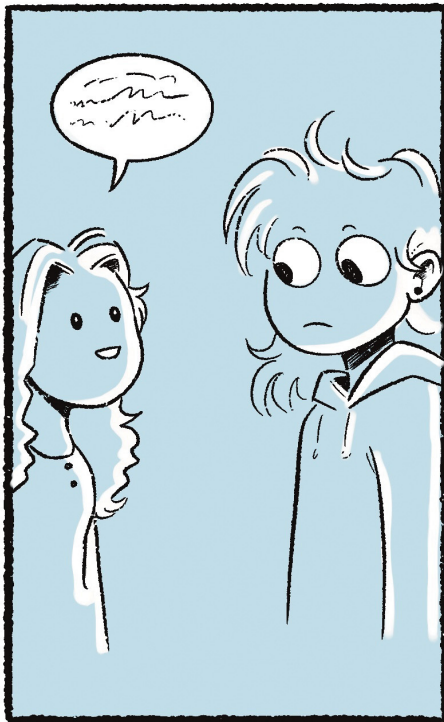


Students cheering at the UConn vs Georgetown game at the XL Center on Wednesday, Feb. 26, 2025. The Huskies beat the Hoyas 93-79. PHOTO BY MADISON HENDRICKS, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS



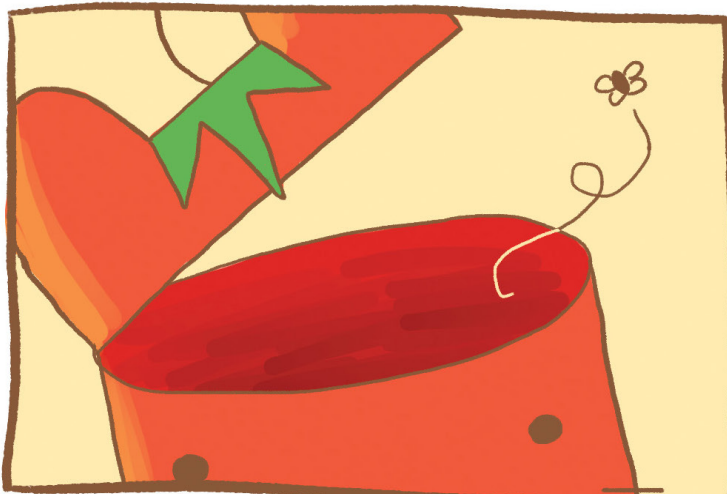
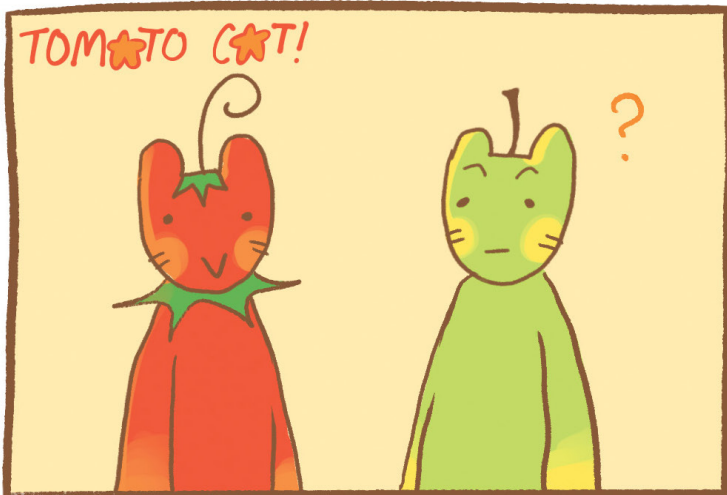
COMIC BY CONNOR SZREJNA, STAFF ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Comics



COMIC BY SAMANTHA HASS, ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Comics



COMIC BY SARAH CHANTRES, STAFF ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

TYLER'S TAKE: TAKING A LOOK AT TOP OFFENSIVE FREE AGENTS



by **Tyler Pruneau**
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After deep diving into defensive free agents, let's flip the script and check out the offensive market for this week's edition of Tyler's Take.

Trey Smith:

Trey Smith searches for a new team coming off his rookie contract with the Kansas City Chiefs. Across the 2024-2025 campaign, the right guard helped Patrick Mahomes by taking pressure off him. In the regular season, Smith gave up zero sacks and only let five defenders get by him to hit Mahomes. In addition, the former Volunteer allowed a total of 26 pressures. Moreover, the 26-year-old carried his blocking dominance into the playoffs, letting up one hit and quarterback takedown. To add on, the big man thrives on blocking for the run game, as he slips into No. 10 with a rating a little under 81, according to PFF. However, Smith struggles more with protecting during passing plays, with a 70.6 grading, per PFF. Overall, the Tennessee native sits at No. 14 amongst 135 guards, per PFF, who gave him a 78.8 grade. With that said, the right guard will get paid and find a new home.

The New England Patriots could land the veteran guard, as rookie quarterback Drake Maye scrambled all year due to the lack of protection up front. To add on, the team was the worst-ranked O-line in the 2024-2025 season, per profootballnetwork. Money also does not play a factor in signing Smith, as the franchise holds the most cap space, with a little over \$128 million, per PFF.

Tee Higgins:

Tee Higgins hits the market after spending the 2024-2025 season with the Cincinnati Bengals under a franchise tag. The



The Chiefs are making it a priority to keep right guard Trey Smith. The team has a strong effort to secure a long term deal after his four year contract ends. PHOTO COURTESY OF @IAMEASHLEYSMITH ON INSTAGRAM

star wide receiver noted that he "would love to be here in Cincinnati [but it's] not in my control," according to Sports Illustrated. Even with Ja'Marr Chase on the field, the 26-year-old still put on a show, tying for the sixth most touchdowns this year with 10, per ESPN. Despite missing four matchups following a hamstring

pull before week one and a quad injury midseason, via Draft Sharks, Higgins continued to shine. The former Clemson Tiger hauled in 73 receptions for a total of 911 yards, nearly securing his third 1000-yard season. Despite Higgins wanting to return, the Bengals need to pay Chase and Trey Hendrickson a

bag, which limits their funding.

In addition to Smith, the Patriots could find themselves a new wide receiver one. The team struggled at finding targets, as they came in last with 2,994 total passing yards over the 2024-2025 season, per ESPN. However, a team like the Washington Commanders

could show interest in Higgins too, as they continue to build around Jayden Daniels. Terry McLaurin led the franchise with 1,096 receiving yards this past season. Besides him, only one other receiver reeled in 500-plus yards for the year, per ESPN. The Commanders could make a significant offer to Higgins, as they hold a little more than \$75 million in cap space, via PFF.

Aaron Jones:

An underrated pickup this offseason is Aaron Jones, who proved with the Minnesota Vikings that he still has gas left in the tank. The running back carried the team down the field for a career-high of 1,138 rushing yards, making him a top 10 running back, per the NFL. However, the former Viking only saw the endzone five times. Regardless, the 30-year-old did this after sustaining a hamstring injury and a sprained MCL in 2023, which forced him to the sidelines for six contests that year. Jones performed in every game in the 2024-2025 season, validating that he can stay healthy. Now, the veteran is searching for his third team in eight years.

A new potential home for Jones is the Las Vegas Raiders. After letting go of Josh Jacobs in the 2024 offseason, the team struggled to get back to a dominating run game. Zamir White was supposed to take over but failed to catch fire, with only 183 total rushing yards in 2024. With the new addition of Chip Kelly as offensive coordinator, running the ball should surprise no one. At Ohio State, Kelly transformed the team into a 92.2 graded rushing offense in the 2024-2025 campaign. This is the fourth best in the Power Four conferences, according to PFF. With a little more than \$92.5 million via PFF, going on a spending spree for Jones should not hurt.

DROPPIN' DIMES: THESE ARE NOT YOUR DAD'S NEW YORK YANKEES

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On Friday morning, the New York Yankees managing general partner Hal Steinbrenner announced that the team would be amending its facial hair policy. According to a written statement by Steinbrenner, the new policy would "allow our players and staffed personnel to have well-groomed beards going forward."

For almost half a century, the Yankees strictly enforced grooming policies, prohibiting players from having facial hair beyond a mustache or hair long enough to touch their shoulders. These policies were implemented by "The Boss" George Steinbrenner. There is a hilarious story that Lou Piniella once contested the rules, saying that Jesus Christ had long hair and a beard. The Boss retorted by challenging the left fielder to walk on water.

This new facial hair policy is not the first change to be made to the Yankees brand in recent years. Last year, the Yankees debuted a corporate sponsor patch on their uniforms for Starr Insurance, which left many fans upset. The Yankees also recently announced they would no longer be playing Frank Sinatra's "New York, New York" after losses at home, replacing it with Sinatra's "That's Life" and other songs instead.

For better or worse, these organizational changes personify how unrecognizable today's Yankees are to the dynasties of the past. The once feared and envied Evil Empire now feels like a relic of a bygone era.

For decades, the Yankees

were the ultimate representation of postseason success. However, a pattern of shortcomings and failures has shattered the former image of the Yankees' dominance and shaken the confidence of the fan base. They no longer foster a winning environment. A team that was once an undeniable dynasty now crumbles on the biggest stage.

The Yankees have not won a World Series since 2009. This past season, they made their first appearance since their championship run, falling to the Los Angeles Dodgers in five games. For a franchise that once measured success in championships, 16 years without a title is unacceptable.

The Yankees have been relegated to just another contender: good enough to get to the playoffs, but never good enough to win it all. Prior to this year, their most recent ALCS runs ended at the hands of the Houston Astros, losing in seven games in 2017, and then getting swept in 2022. They've faced early exits at the hands of division rivals as well, with disappointing losses to the Tampa Bay Rays in the 2020 ALDS and repeated eliminations by their most hated adversary, the Boston Red Sox, in both 2018 and 2021.

Winning matters. The Yankees used to be the destination for baseball's biggest names; now, they are just another option. In the past, when a superstar hit the open market, the Yankees were always the favorites to land him. In 2009, the Yankees built a powerhouse using the free agent market. After acquiring Alex Rodriguez in 2004, the Yankees pushed their roster over the hump by going after ace pitcher CC Sabathia

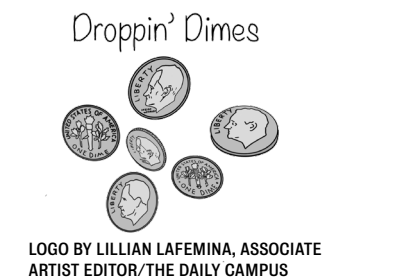


New closer Devin Williams shows rebellion to the facial hair policy before its amendments. PHOTO COURTESY OF @EVERYTHIN

and power hitter Mark Teixeira. These additions made the Yankees an unstoppable force on their way to capturing their 27th title.

Today, the Yankees consistently miss out on baseball's top free agents. In 2019, the Yankees went after Manny Machado and Bryce Harper but were unable to close deals on either superstar. Harper had even openly expressed his love for the Yankees and said he wanted to play for them. Over the years, they have let players like Corey Seager, Carlos Correa and Trea Turner slip by.

Attracting overseas talent, especially from Japan, is difficult for a northeast team, but that wasn't always the case for the Yankees. They signed Hideki Matsui in 2003, one of the biggest icons in Japanese baseball history. With the Yankees, he was a key contributor in bringing home the 2009 World Series, where he was also named MVP. The Yankees signed Masahiro Tanaka in 2015, who, in ten postseason starts, posted a 3.33 ERA. Now, west coast teams like the Dodgers provide a winning pedigree and big-market allure that New York



LOGO BY LILLIAN LAFEMINA, ASSOCIATE ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

once did, but closer to home for these players. This has allowed them to close players over the Yankees like Shohei Ohtani, Yoshinobu Yamamoto and Roki Sasaki.

The Yankees are not sinking money back into the players. Spotrac projects New York's total payroll allocations to be over \$283 million dollars heading into the 2025 season. A recent report from Jon Heyman suggests the Yankees are "out of loot" for more free agent moves.

They just moved on from one of the best players in baseball, Juan Soto, in favor of putting together a complete team. Yet, after spending \$308 million and making the World Series last year, they are going to cut the payroll by \$25 million, despite having a glaring hole at third base and a DH that hasn't swung a bat in months.

If you're the Yankees, how on earth could you not be going all-in on securing a championship right now? The clocks on the players that have defined the last decade of Yankee baseball are ticking. How many more years of prime Aaron Judge and Gerrit Cole do you have left? Despite having a great postseason, we have been seeing the decline of Giancarlo Stanton for years.

The Yankees' culture has shifted away from an unwavering commitment to championships and dominance to one of failed expectations and corporate-driven financial caution. With the current trajectory the Bronx Bombers are headed on, even a rule as seemingly silly and insignificant as the grooming policy may be one of the last few reminders of an era defined by discipline and glory.

Sports

Photo of the Day | UConn v Boston University



UConn men's hockey plays Boston University in Storrs, Conn. on Feb. 25, 2025. Toscano family Ice Forum was full of fans who cheered on the Huskies the whole game. PHOTO BY SYDNEY CHANDLER, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

BRAYDENS BREAKDOWN: A WAY-TOO EARLY LOOK AT THE VLADIMIR GUERRERO JR. SWEEPSTAKES

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Last Monday at 9 p.m., the deadline for the Toronto Blue Jays to extend Vladimir Guerrero Jr. came and went with no deal being reached. Guerrero told reporters that the Jays would have to compete with the 29 other teams in the MLB if they wanted to sign the second-generation superstar.

The 2021 AL MVP runner-up has been consistently great over the past four years. His 2021 season was remarkable, and he would have run away with the MVP award if Shohei Ohtani did not exist. Guerrero led the American League in runs scored, home runs, on base percentage, slugging and OPS+. In 2024, the first baseman finished one hit shy of 200 for the season

and accumulated 6.2 WAR. The righty also hit 30 home runs for the third time in the past four seasons. Both seasons resulted in Guerrero winning the Silver Slugger Award. He also picked up the Gold Glove Award at first base in 2022.

There are plenty of teams rumored to be interested in the soon-to-be 26-year-old slugger. With his next contract estimated to be worth over \$500 million, Guerrero will be the prime target on the market this offseason if he decides to part ways with Toronto.

The two most mentioned teams for Vladdy in free agency are the Boston Red Sox and the New York Mets. These teams both have superstars hailing from the Dominican Republic, the place where his father, Hall of Famer Vladimir Guerrero Sr., was born.

Rafael Devers is locked in long-term with Boston and is known friends with Vladdy. This move would require one of them to permanently be at first base, and something would have to be done with Triston Casas, currently at first for the Sox. There were rumors this offseason about casas being potentially traded to the Mariners in exchange for one of their high-end pitchers. Guerrero has already hit moonshots over the Green Monster as an opponent, including a 471-foot home run over the monster last season. Having 81 games at Fenway Park every season would boost his numbers even more.

The newly acquired Juan Soto will be a cornerstone for the Mets over the course of the next decade. With Pete Alonso only re-signing for two years, the future of the first baseman spot is

still uncertain in Queens. Guerrero could slide right behind his counterpart from the DR in the Mets lineup, along with Francisco Lindor.

A team that looked like they would never be in play for Vladdy has joined the conversation as of last weekend. The New York Yankees, a team Guerrero previously said he would never join, seem to be a realistic option in free agency. This offseason saw the Yankees ink Paul Goldschmidt to a one-year deal while also trading for Cody Bellinger. Goldschmidt will assume first base duties this season, with Bellinger also able to play first if necessary. This leaves a hole next season with Guerrero as a possible replacement candidate.

The four-time all-star called his reluctance to sign with the Yankees "in the past" in an interview with the New York Post,

leaving the door open for all 30 teams, including the Bronx Bombers. After failing to resign Soto this offseason and missing out on Yoshinobu Yamamoto and Roki Sasaki these past two off seasons, New York must put everything they have on the table to try and sign Guerrero.

A trade at the July deadline cannot be ruled out as a possibility. If Toronto is nowhere near the playoff picture in a highly competitive AL East, they would presumably have no issue moving on from Guerrero, assuming they will not retain him in the offseason. We saw Soto get traded from the Nationals to the Padres a few years ago, so a superstar like Vladdy getting dealt is not impossible.

No matter what team he suits up for in 2026, this season will be crucial for Guerrero and his future.



LOGO BY LILIAN LAERINA, ASSOCIATE ARTIST/EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

HUSKIES IN THE PROS: POST-NBA ALL-STARS WEEKEND OVERVIEW-UCONN EDITION

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The Huskies returned to the court after the NBA All-Stars break, with head-to-head clashes and players returning from injuries.

Stephon Castle:

After winning the Rising Stars' Most Valuable Player Award at the NBA All-Stars weekend, Stephon Castle struggled to transition his skills back to the San Antonio Spurs. Looking at the team's last four matchups, the most points the rookie scored was 12 against the Detroit Pistons. Despite losing Victor Wembanyama for the rest of the season, court time continues to fluctuate for the guard from game-to-game. For example, in the back-to-back clashes with the New Orleans Pelicans, Castle played 22 minutes the first night but declined the following game with 12 minutes. However, the 2024 National Champion only contributed a total of six points between both contests. Nonetheless, Castle proved that getting out of a slump is no problem, as he put up 23 points against the Los Angeles Lakers after knocking down five baskets against the Milwaukee Bucks.

Donovan Clingan:

Despite not going to the NBA All-Stars weekend, taking a week off did not affect Donovan Clingan. The big man averaged seven points in the Portland Trail Blazers' previous three games, shooting perfect from the field against the Charlotte



New Orleans Pelicans guard Jordan Hawkins (24) dunks the ball in front of San Antonio Spurs center Bismack Biyombo (18) in the second half of an NBA basketball game in New Orleans, LA, Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2025. AP PHOTO/TYLER KAUFMAN

Hornets. To add on, the 7-foot-2 player invited the Lakers to his block party, swatting away three balls. Moreover, the rookie continues to lead the team in blocks, averaging nearly one and a half a game, per ESPN. The odds of seeing more of Clingan look high, as Deandre Ayton suffered a calf strain, leaving him out for four matches. With nearly 21 minutes given to the two-time national champion, following the All-Stars weekend, nothing is stopping his dominance.

Jordan Hawkins:

After returning to the lineup

following a left ankle injury, Jordan Hawkins consistently increased his contribution. Prior to the All-Star weekend, the second-year guard competed against the Sacramento Kings and dished out 16 points. A week later, the former Husky got into a slump like Castle, dropping five points against the Dallas Mavericks. However, in the back-to-back clashes with the Spurs, Hawkins combined for 22 points. Something to note is that the 22-year-old struggles from outside the field right now, hitting about two out of a little more than five attempts a game.

Despite missing the target, the former Husky averaged 23 minutes in the last three contests, giving him plenty of time to get an increase in confidence.

Andre Jackson Jr.:

After participating in the 2025 dunk competition, Andre Jackson Jr. suffered a right wrist sprain, causing him to miss the Los Angeles Clippers matchup. To add on, the guard hardly played against the Washington Wizards and Miami Heat games, seeing only two and a half minutes. The former Husky has yet to compete in a full contest, and his availability for their

clash against the Denver Nuggets on Thursday stays in the air, per CBS Sports.

Tristen Newton:

Tristen Newton continues to thrive for the Iowa Wolves in the G League, recording 17 points, nearly seven rebounds and a little over six assists per game. In recent news, the former Husky earned his second triple-double, putting up 15 buckets, 12 boards and 10 set ups against the Sioux Falls Skyforce. Furthermore, the 23-year-old carried his dominance into Monday night's matchup, securing a double-double with 23 points and 10 snatches off the rim. However, the guard struggles to get a shot on the main roster, as the Minnesota Timberwolves last called him up on February 13.

Cam Spencer:

Cam Spencer returned to basketball after recovering from a fractured thumb suffered back in January. The former Husky started off slow in his first game back against the Rio Grande Valley G League team, dropping 13 points. However, getting back into the swing of things didn't take long, as the 24-year-old knocked down 25 points in back-to-back matchups. With the Memphis Grizzlies' roster fully healthy, seeing Spencer brought up is low for right now.

Adama Sanogo:

Adama Sanogo sits as a free agent after the Chicago Bulls waived him on Wednesday, Feb. 19. The team finalized the decision after finding out the 22-year-old will miss four weeks from a right ailing knee, per CBS Sports.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL: HUSKIES AND BLUE JAYS MEET IN HARTFORD FOR PIVOTAL BIG EAST DUEL

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If the fifth-ranked UConn women's basketball team (26-3, 16-0) defeats No. 22 Creighton (23-4, 15-1) at the XL Center on Thursday night, the Huskies will claim a fifth consecutive Big East regular season championship since rejoining the conference before the 2020-2021 season.

If the Blue Jays storm into Hartford and defeat the Huskies, pitting both teams at 16-1 in conference play, the conference title will be decided by this weekend's results from UConn home versus Marquette and Creighton home versus Villanova.

Connecticut has won five in a row by an average of 35 points since falling to Tennessee in Knoxville, including wins over No. 4 South Carolina (29 points) and Seton Hall (42 points).

Creighton has not lost since Jan. 25, when the Huskies ran away in the second quarter during the team's first meeting in Omaha. The Blue Jays have won 22 of 24 after starting the season 1-2, losing only to then-undefeated UCLA and sixth-ranked UConn.

UConn holds a 10-0 advantage over Creighton in the all-time series, dating back to 2014. The Blue Jays have come close on multiple occasions, most notably in 2023 when the Huskies held off a furious third quarter comeback to escape with a 62-60 victory in Gampel Pavilion.

The Blue Jays are powered by the scintillating scoring duo of Lauren Jensen (18.3 ppg) and Morgan Maly (17.5), with tertiary scoring coming from sharpshooter Molly Mogensen and junior guard Kiani Lockett.

Jensen sports one of the best raw stat lines in the conference—and perhaps the country—with career high averages in points (18.3), rebounds (4.1), assists (3.9) and steals (1.3). The wiry fifth year guard is an uber-consistent scorer, notching above 20 points on 13 occasions this season.

Maly may pose a bigger threat to the Connecticut team than in the frontcourt, as both Morgan Cheli and Ice Brady are sidelined with injuries. Maly's average of 5.7 rebounds per game spearheads a Blue Jay glass attack rebounding in the 87th percentile nationally on the defensive end (27.2 defensive rebounds per game).

"I feel like we have some [respect], but not as much as I feel like we deserve. Part of that is because we haven't knocked off UConn yet," said Maly at Big East media day in October.

The fifth-year senior's surly 14 points and nine rebounds played a vital role in keeping the Blue Jays around during the team's first meeting in January.

Creighton will find its scoring primarily through Jensen and Maly, who account for 48.5% of the team's points on average, but what will it get from its third and fourth options?

Mogensen posted a 14-point, seven rebound line when the Huskies visited Omaha last month, hitting on two three pointers and dishing four assists in a hardy effort from the wing. The senior guard is another veteran presence on one of the most experienced starting lineups in the Big East.

Perhaps the joker in Creighton's deck, Kiani Lockett, missed the Blue Jays' last game against the Huskies.

Lockett has been a sure-handed starter in her third



UConn women's basketball plays Butler at the XL Center in Hartford, Conn. on Feb. 2, 2025. The Huskies played hard and won the game with a final score of 101-59.
PHOTO BY SYDNEY CHANDLER, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

year with the program, averaging 6.1/3.3/2.2 as a secondary scoring option. Lockett missed January's game with an injury but has played in every game since, taking on a facilitator role alongside Jensen in the backcourt.

These teams' profiles are so similar from an analytical perspective that it took me over 15 minutes of filtering to find a splitting difference. Both offenses have operated at a top 15 level nationally (UConn No. 1, Creighton No. 13), both teams shoot the ball efficiently (UConn 58.2% EFG, Creighton

53.5% EFG) and both teams rank inside the top five in turnover rate (third and fifth, respectively).

Most emphatically, I noticed, Creighton allows opponents to shoot 47.8% from inside the arc (269th in the country) and ranks in the bottom 30 nationally in offensive rebound percentage (25.2). Exploiting these two glaring weaknesses will be crucial for the Huskies, who shoot 58.5% from two-point range and rebound defensively at a top 25 rate in the country (27.6%).

It is also worth noting that the Huskies may crank up the offensive tempo to out-gun Creighton's relatively slow pace (221st in the country) to build an early lead, much like how January's game played out.

And the final key: bench points will be at a premium. Connecticut's 20.8 bench points per game dwarfs Creighton's 15.8 (41st percentile nationally). Tiring the Blue Jays out with tempo and getting the starters out of the game will give Connecticut an offensive advantage.

NEW YORK KNICKS: CONTENDERS OR PRETENDERS?

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Following the Knicks' loss to the Boston Celtics, many fans around the league are asking the question: Are the Knicks frauds who cannot play their competition? They are as of now, 0-7 against the Boston Celtics, Oklahoma City Thunder and the Cleveland Cavaliers—the top 3 teams in the league. These losses are not close either. In these games, they lost by an average of twenty points. Let's get into the reasons why.

Tom Thibodeau and the minute policing conversation

The entire starting five is in the top 20 in minutes per game, leaguewide, with all of them averaging at least 35.1 minutes. Notably, looking at the box score of non-overtimes games, it is not unusual to see 2-3 Knicks starters have 40 minutes logged for the night. Looking at the box score when they win in regulation, most of the starters play upwards of 35 minutes. In their win over the Raptors on Feb. 4, all the Knicks' starters played above 40 minutes.

However, what drew criticism towards the squad is that Karl Anthony Towns, in their recent loss to the Celtics, was seen limping on his way to the bench. It was believed that he hurt his knee and was visibly in pain. After leaving for the locker room and coming back, he was still on the floor when the Knicks were down 20. I'm not sure if that was a coaching decision but regardless of the actual reason, this contributes to the narrative that Knicks starters are overplayed.

Lack of defense, depth / size and bench efficiency

The Knicks' defense is not good enough when facing elite teams. It is fine when they are not playing the top 3 teams but against them, it leads to open threats.

Knicks fans, myself included, are hinging on Mitchell Robinson's return. It was originally

believed that he would return mid-January, but considering it is the end of February, hopes are quickly dwindling. Whenever he comes back, his defensive impact needs to be great enough to offset the rest of the team's defensive issues. However, there's no denying that he's injury prone, and banking your teams' defensive hopes on the off chance he comes back playing Defensive Player of the Year level isn't realistic.

But, of course, Robinson and the starting five are not the only players on this roster. Who else do we get? Well, if I told you, you might not be able to put name to face, because outside of Cam Payne, Miles McBride and Ariel Hukporti, most other players do not see the floor for long.

Tyler Kolek and Pacome Dadiet are in the same boat, where they are not given time to showcase their abilities through rotational play.

Teams like the Celtics and the Cavs produce results off their bench, but this is hard if you do not play your bench. Knicks players on the bench are not given the minutes to prove themselves on an NBA floor. How are you supposed to know how good someone is if you cannot see them play?

The off-season acquisition criticism

The most notable acquisition criticism is about Mikal Bridges, who was traded for five first round picks. He is faced with criticism for being inconsistent on offense and sometimes on defense, which was why the Knicks got him. You can argue that he is not worth that, which would be correct, because Bridges is not a runner-up DPOY material anymore. But, when a team ships off their potential future on the off chance you can play some level of defense, it is frustrating when you cannot.

We also must talk about Towns. As great as he is on offense, he has significant issues on defense, especially when it comes to the perimeter. There is a worry that Towns is a play-off dropper, not a riser. Despite

whether that is the case, his performance on defense is subpar so far, which a lot of critical Knicks fans are harping on.

Then, there's OG Anunoby. Is he worth the \$212 million, especially when they could have resigned Isaiah Hartenstein, who is now on the Thunder—another team they cannot beat? You must think about cap space and that the Knicks offered him as much money as they could. Those losses are things you cannot help, but considering recent streaky performances, many people think he is not worth the money.

There have been arguments about the general loss of their identity. The toughness they displayed was lost when we lost Julius Randle, Donte DiVincenzo and Hartenstein in the off-season. I partially agree, but you also must investigate the potential negative aspects of players like Randle.

Optimism in retrospect

Alright, Knick fan bias incoming. Stay with me here, but I remember a good three years ago when the Knicks had blown a 28-point lead against a Nets team with no Kevin Durant, Kyrie Irving or Ben Simmons. It was their most recent loss out of the total three games they blew a 28-point lead in February alone. They were the first team to do that in a calendar month in the last 25 years. It was then that I thought Thibodeau was going to be fired, but they kept him, and the Knicks have been better ever since.

If you go further back, to 2018-19, 17-65, David Fizdale coached the Knicks, losing the lottery with Durant and Kyrie going literally 5 miles away from the Knicks. Pair that with the horrible ownership and front office fumbles of the 21st century, and the Knicks were the cautionary tale of the league.

In comparison to today, hopes are up. They were higher at the start of the season, but the first game of the season was a reality check on the hype. Things get rocky and teams cannot win

every game, and sometimes, as fans, we lose sight of that.

If I were Leon Rose, I probably wouldn't trade the five first rounders for Bridges. Do some negotiations, or wait a year. The Towns-Randle trade is something you do nine times out of ten, except for the one-off chance where you either doubt Towns or believe in Randle. In the Knicks first game against the Timberwolves, the point was illustrated wonderfully.

In discussions with other fans, it is mostly a 43-minute-a-game problem, though it's a much more nuanced conversation than that.

It will probably be okay. The Knicks, realistically, have a second-round ceiling and can go no further for reasons unbeknownst to me. Nothing changes 'till we get James Dolan out of here. Ever since Donald Sterling got booted out of the league, I am convinced he's got to be the worst owner in the league. His presence is what is holding this team back.

It is my belief that the Knicks are not contenders because they

cannot win against the top three teams in the league, but they are not pretenders either. Being above .500 and keeping the third seed in the Eastern Conference is not an easy thing to do, despite it being the weaker conference.

Their strength of schedule looking forward is not too bad, with an even mix of contenders and bottom NBA teams. They play the Cavaliers two more times and the Celtics one more time, so the hope here may just die with the Knicks going 0-10 against the top 3 teams. Regardless, they are still in a better position than a lot of the league. Although they do not have a lot in the way of draft capital, this is the foundation for a good core to hopefully contend future.

Or, by the 21st century curse, they may not win anything. This is technically fine by media standards. Dolan makes enough money, so there is no real motivation to win anything if you think about it.

Even then, the fans of the Knicks deserve better than that.



After the Knicks' loss to the Celtics, they now have a combined 0-7 record against the top three teams in the NBA.
PHOTO COURTESY OF @NBAFAILZ ON INSTAGRAM



Sports

WOMEN'S LACROSSE: UCONN FALLS TO HARVARD IN AN OVERTIME THRILLER

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The UConn women's lacrosse team took its second loss of the season to Harvard in overtime, despite making a comeback in the second half on Wednesday night.

The Huskies took over from the start, as Riley Daly won the draw, leading to Eliza Bowman sniping one in for a 1-0 lead within two minutes of quarter one. Anna Magennis set Bowman up for the opportunity. Right after, UConn nearly extended the deficit as Rayea Davis attempted a free position shot but missed wide.

However, the takeover did not last long, as Connecticut rewarded Harvard with a free position shot. Callie Batchelder took advantage of the opportunity and found the equalizer for the team. Nonetheless, the Huskies fought back as Davis landed her first goal of the night assisted by her teammate Emma Dacey after the attack circled the net.

After back-and-forth turnovers, Harvard found an opening, but Tori Cini missed the opportunity. Despite defending well, JoJo Gum acquired a yellow card for UConn, giving Harvard their second free position shot. Caroline Mullahy notched Harvard's second goal tying everything up. UConn failed to stop the pressure, as Harvard snatched the draw, leading to firing a wide shot. Nonetheless, the Harvard defense struggled at fouling, allowing Bowman to net her second, putting the Huskies back on top.

Daly once again controlled the ball for Connecticut at the beginning of the second quarter, but both teams locked each other

down. However, Tori Balsler deadlocked the match off a free position for Harvard, after UConn caused a foul.

Not long after winning the draw, the Crimson stormed down the field and Hannah Shiels scored for the lead. However, the Huskies responded with a netter of their own by Megan O'Brien. Harvard failed to stop the bleeding after letting up their third foul, allowing Husky Kelsey Neary to recover the lead.

Coming out of a Harvard timeout, the momentum shifted, as Charlotte Hodgson brought the program back to life, tying the contest at five apiece. However, Bowman nearly topped the team with three goals, but Lizzie Francioli blocked the shot attempt. Harvard cleared the ball, causing Hodgson to secure her

second goal and take the lead. To add on, the deficit nearly opened to a two-point matchup, but Cini saved the shot.

Connecticut struggled to fight back, as Mullahy fired a shot, but Cini prevented the goal. Coming down the wire, fouls played a major role. Kicking things off, Karsyn Burnash nailed the foul shot for UConn. A few turnovers later and Ava Plata grabbed the 7-6 lead. With about a minute and a half remaining in the second frame, it looked as if the Huskies would go into the half on top, but Harvard rewrote the script. Mullahy and Batchelder challenged Connecticut's defense, leading to a free position shot awarded to both that converted an 8-7 turn of events.

Coming into the third quarter, Harvard continued pressing

the keeper, as Batchelder tallied her third goal. Not long later, Stella Shea converted a free position shot and fired past Cini, increasing the deficit to 10-7. Despite not gaining any momentum, the Huskies never gave up. Mullahy turned the ball over after getting a yellow card, which allowed O'Brien to toss one up to Eve McGrogan, who notched her first goal and stopped UConn's goal deficit.

Coming into the third quarter, the tides changed for Connecticut after Jenna Giardina passed the ball to Dacey, allowing her to make a diving goal. Connecticut looked for the tiebreaker after taking three attempts but failed to get past the keeper. Following those events, Harvard cleared the ball that put Charley Meier in a position to keep a two-point deficit. For the remainder of

the third frame, neither team scored.

Heading into the final quarter Daly controlled the ball, but Plata turned over the rock to Harvard, putting UConn in foul trouble. The Pilgrims attempted two free positions shots, but one missed the target and Cini blocked the other. Connecticut continued to struggle at botching plays, leading to two shots fired that missed wide for Harvard.

The Huskies finally got something going with their first free position shot in the fourth quarter, but Burnash failed to punch the ball in. However, Bowman secured a hat trick after Beran forced a turnover, making it a one-point match. In addition, after a free position, saved by Francioli, O'Brien picked the ball up for the Huskies, found Davis, who passed it to Burnash, who launched it and leveled the contest.

Despite gaining control, fouls and turnovers by UConn gave the Crimson opportunities. However, Cini stayed strong and prevented the goal. After trading shots, Davis found her second goal, after staying quiet in the second and third quarters. Nonetheless, following a timeout, Meier notched her second netter. Before heading into overtime at 12-12, O'Brien struck the ball one last time, but Francioli kept the program alive.

Harvard kicked off the overtime stretch strong, as Batchelder fired one at Cini but went wide. However, the Pilgrims got it right back after Annabel Child caused a change in possession, allowing Shea to seal the game 13-12.

Next up, the Huskies will return to Storrs on Sat., March 1 to take on the Massachusetts Minutemen. Face-off is scheduled for 1 p.m.



UConn women's lacrosse takes on Fairfield University at Joseph J. Morrone Stadium in Storrs, Conn. on Wednesday, Feb. 12, 2025. The Huskies took a massive 18-5 win over the Stags, with No. 6 Rayea Davis scoring a career-high six goals. PHOTO BY ZACH MOLLER, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

MEN'S BASKETBALL: HUSKIES XL CENTER DOMINANCE CONTINUES WITH 93-79 BOUNCE-BACK WIN OVER HOYAS

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While the season itself hasn't been up to expectations so far, the UConn men's basketball team has continued its dominance from its home away from home: the XL Center in Hartford, Conn. On Wednesday night, the Huskies improved to 8-0 at the Insurance Capital of the World, with their 93-79 victory over the Georgetown Hoyas.

A significant storyline heading into Wednesday night's contest surrounded Georgetown forward Thomas Sorber, who was announced to miss the rest of the season due to a foot injury. The freshman from New Jersey averaged 14.5 points and 8.5 boards per night up to this point.

As has happened in so many of Connecticut's games this season, the program typically starts off slow, with Wednesday being no exception. Neither the offense nor defense was clicking, as the Hoyas jumped out to a commanding 14-4 lead. Micah Peavy hit a pair of threes, and after a UConn turnover, it seemed like it would be a long night for Connecticut — until it wasn't.

After a quick timeout to get readjusted, UConn fired back. Solo Ball hit a quick pair of threes, Hassan Diarra went coast to coast, and suddenly, the XL Center crowd was sent into a frenzy.

For a significant portion of the first half, both sides were trading blows, with neither side gaining a real edge. However, an important reason why the first half shook out the way it did was due to the performance of Tarris Reed Jr. The 6-foot-10 big man made a killing in the paint,

scoring 11 points on 5-6 shooting and grabbing six boards in 14 minutes of work. Reed also gave Connecticut their first lead of the game with a little under six minutes to go in the half, fighting for an and-1 bucket. The Michigan transfer's performance was even more critical considering that Samson Johnson did not get out to the start he would have liked, picking up a quick pair of fouls and logging only six minutes of work in the first half. Despite this, Georgetown did not go down without a fight.

Jayden Epps led the way for the Sorber-less Hoyas, putting up 11 points in 16 minutes of work. Peavy also continued his early scoring success, finishing the half with 10 points, though he could not hit another three-pointer. However, the same success was not reciprocated across the program. Not only this, but the UConn defense was closing out better, and the Hoyas had to scrap for points. On the other side of things, UConn's main contributors were contributing, and Reed's presence down low allowed Solo Ball to similarly make a killing shooting the basketball.

At this point, it seemed like just your typical UConn game, as the ball did not lie for the 21-year-old sophomore. Ball scored 11 first-half points on 4-6 shooting, including 3-5 from downtown. Liam McNeeley also got out to a solid 8-point (3-6) start for the program. This scoring duo greatly contributed to UConn's seven point first half lead. However, a significant advantage for UConn early on was that Hoyas' forward Drew Fielder committed three first-half fouls, which undoubtedly altered the final score of Wednesday's contest.

Fielder responded to a three-



Tarris Reed fights his way to the hoop versus Georgetown. PHOTO BY MADISON HENDRICKS, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

point first half in a big way, as the sophomore forward put up eight straight points for the Hoyas' in the second half, bringing the contest to within three points. However, within the first five minutes of the half, Fielder picked up fouls No. 4 and 5, meaning that his night was over, and this deflated the shorthanded Georgetown offense.

"I don't think we showed any type of defensive discipline at all," head coach Ed Cooley noted on his side's defensive effort. "A couple of early fouls and you're going to make a gamble," add-

ing, "You got to use verticality when you are in that situation, but maybe I should have subbed [Fielder out], so that's my fault for leaving him out there."

Peavy kept up his first-half scoring success in a significant way, putting up an additional 15 points on 6-8 shooting. As devastating as the swingman's shooting was, the rest of the program struggled to put points on the board. Conversely, the UConn offense was still firing on all cylinders, and Reed was again making a killing.

The Michigan transfer put up nine more points on 3-4

shooting. Reed also completed the double-double with an additional four rebounds. Head coach Dan Hurley expressed how dominating this version of Reed was and how the program needs that inner Kodiak Bear to emerge.

"When I get that version of Tarris Reed, he plays 28 minutes," Hurley said. "If he could ever just unlock in himself this motor and this ferocity and this violence and this dominating mindset... he's a difference-making player."

McNeeley kept on rolling from the first 20 minutes, putting up nine additional points, including a 4-4 performance from the free throw line. Free throws were a significant part of the result of Wednesday night's contest, with UConn shooting a perfect 15-15 from the charity stripe in the second half.

However, perhaps the most encouraging performance from the program came from Hassan Diarra, who built off a four-point first half in a significant way with a 10-point second-half flurry.

"When he was healthy, he was kind of playing games like this; he was like 12 [points] and eight [assists]. When he was physically in worse shape, the production wasn't there because he was basically in survival mode. He had much better pop today physically," Hurley said.

While Georgetown was shorthanded on Wednesday night, UConn's home win was still a massive bounce-back win after dropping a Storrs South showdown to St. John's 89-75. UConn has a chance to keep the momentum going this Saturday at Providence for the program's final Big East Road Trip showdown.